

Message Text

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17-12

ACTION FBO-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-06 ISO-00 SSO-00 /008 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8547

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ABLD, PO

SUBJ: NEW CHANCERY IN LISBON

REF: DEPARTMENT TELCON SEPTEMBER 28 TO HOWELL

SUMMARY: EMBASSY CURRENTLY IN NEGOTIATIONS CONCERNING RESTRICTIONS ON PRESENT SITE FOR NEW CHANCERY OR POSSIBLE EXCHANGE FOR ANOTHER SITE. REQUEST FBO EXPERT ASSIST. ALSO REQUEST DELAY ANY DECISION WHICH WOULD DISRUPT HOPED-FOR TIMETABLE. END SUMMARY

1. EMBASSY WAS ADVISED THROUGH REF TELCON THAT MEETING CRUCIAL TO PROGRESS ON EMBASSY BUILDING IN LISBON IS SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 2. IN VIEW OF THIS, CHARGE CALLED ON PRESIDENT OF LISBON MUNICIPALITY OCTOBER 1 TO SEEK CLARIFICATION CONCERNING MUNICIPALITY RULING THAT EXISTING STRUCTURE ON SITE OWNED BY EMBASSY CANNOT BE DEMOLISHED FOR REPLACEMENT BY NEW EMBASSY BUILDING. PRESIDENT OF MUNICIPALITY CONFIRMED THIS RULING THOUGH CONFESSING IGNORANCE AS TO WHETHER SUCH RULING MIGHT BE CONSIDERED IN CONTRAVENTION OF VIENNA CONVENTION ON DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. PRESIDENT MADE SUGGESTION THAT MUNICIPALITY WOULD BE WILLING PROVIDE ANOTHER SITE FOR EMBASSY CONSTRUCTION OF SAME SIZE AS SITE NOW OWNED BY EMBASSY, ALTHOUGH ADMITTEDLY LESS CENTRALLY LOCATED.

2. CHARGE VISITED ONLY SITE SPECIFICALLY IDENTIFIED
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BY PRESIDENT OF MUNICIPALITY FOR EXCHANGE, ASIDE FROM

LACK OF CENTRAL LOCATION, GENERAL AREA LESS ATTRACTIVE THAN PRESENTLY OWNED SITE ALTHOUGH IT WOULD HAVE ADVANTAGE OF BEING BARE LAND NOT REQUIRING TIME AND COST OF DEMOLITION WORK, WOULD BE SOMEWHAT EASIER OF ACCESS THAN PRESENT SITE WHICH IS IN OLDER SECTION OF CITY WITH NARROW STREETS. WE HAVE ASKED MUNICIPALITY TO IDENTIFY OTHER ALTERNATIVES.

3. CHARGE SUBSEQUENTLY TELEPHONED SECRETARY GENERAL OF FOREIGN OFFICE WHO WHILE NOT DEFINITE WAS OF OPINION THAT PORTUGAL'S OBLIGATION UNDER VIENNA CONVENTION MIGHT RULE OUT RESTRICTIONS PLACED BY MUNICIPALITY OF EMBASSY CONSTRUCTION. HE ASKED FOR AND WE ARE FOWARDING DIPLOMATIC NOTE FROM EMBASSY WHICH HE PROMISED WOULD BE GIVEN EXPEDITIOUS CONSIDERATION BY MINISTRY.

4. COMMENT: OUR OWN READING OF VIENNA CONVENTION IS THAT ARTICLE 21 IS ONLY POSSIBLE APPLICABLE PROVISION AND IT SEEMS A WEAK REED TO LEAN UPON. SEEMS LIKELIEST THAT WE WILL HAVE TO ACCEPT ALTERNATE SITE WHICH, ALTHOUGH LACKING THE PRESTIGE OF PRESENT SITE'S ADDRESS, MIGHT IN FACT BE MORE PRACTICAL. WE HOPE FBO CAN SEND EXPERT TO LISBON SOONEST TO ASSIST US IN EVALUATING THE ALTERNATIVES. MEANWHILE, WE WOULD HOPE THAT NO DECISION NEED BE TAKEN IMMEDIATELY WHICH WOULD PRECLUDE INITIATION THIS YEAR OF NEW EMBASSY PROJECT HERE SHOULD WE BE ABLE SHORTLY EITHER TO RESOLVE QUESTION CONCERNING EXISTING SITE OR IDENTIFY A SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE SITE.
POST

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 OCT 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973LISBON03614
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731056/aaaabpkx.tel
Line Count: 92
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION FBO
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: DEPARTMENT TELCON SEPTEMBER 28 TO HO, WELL
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 SEP 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21-Sep-2001 by rowellE0>; APPROVED <28-Nov-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEW CHANCERY IN LISBON
TAGS: ABLD, PO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005